

**GREATER SHEPPARTON CITY COUNCIL**  
**INNOVATE**  
**RECONCILIATION**  
**ACTION PLAN**  
JULY 2023 TO JULY 2025



# MEET THE ARTISTS

## Troy Firebrace

### About the Artist

Troy is a proud Yorta Yorta man whose love for art started when he was a child. Following his love of art led Troy to study a Bachelor in Creative Arts, majoring in Fine Arts at La Trobe University, Bendigo. These studies allowed Troy to explore different artists and styles. Art mediums including clay and wood allow him to find his own artist style, concepts and motivation.

Troy's work has been displayed at Kaiela Arts Shepparton, Melbourne Museum and Dudley House Bendigo. Troy's talent and passion has been recognised worldwide and has led to commissioning of pieces from various sectors including education, government and private industries, as well as personal pieces. Troy's work is influenced by his strong Aboriginal culture and has assisted him in discovering and reflecting his true self through his art.



### Description



*My work comes off a key word in the Reconciliation Action Plan: Innovate demonstrated through the key elements being mirrored.*

*The background is traditional art marking representing the Elders in the community and the Elders of the past laying the foundation for us to build on, acknowledging the strength, resilience and sacrifice given.*

*The geometric shapes are the community of today, the modern and current practice of organisations, technology and practice that help build the next layer in history.*

*The river represents the area which we live and work on. The reflective water is all community members working together ensuring the health of the river improves, which reflects the good work when we work together as a community for a common goal.*

*The edge pattern is the ancient story and spirits that are flowing in the sky, the guidance of the unknown becoming known. The feeling of what is right and what is wrong during moments of decisions.*

**Troy Firebrace**

## Tammy-Lee Atkinson

### About the Artist

Tammy-Lee Atkinson is a proud Yorta Yorta woman and self-taught artist. Born in Echuca, raised in Cummeragunja, Barmah and Kerang, Tammy now lives in Mooroopna. Tammy-Lee completed her Bachelor of Visual Arts at the Institute of Koorie Education at Deakin University, Geelong and is a consistent contributor to Kaiela Arts, Shepparton.

Tammy-Lee grew up admiring her grandmother's artwork from emu egg carving and feather flowers; always being surrounded by art has nurtured a natural passion for art. Painting and drawing has always been a hobby for Tammy-Lee for most of her life; being able to express herself through art has made her grounded. Art was always an escape from life for Tammy-Lee.

Her distinctive style of painting, drawing and printmaking convey a contemporary expression of her love of Culture. Tammy's artworks now grace many local offices and homes in the Region.

We would like to thank Tammy-Lee for previously developing the design for our first Reflect Reconciliation Action Plan 2019-2020. We commissioned Tammy-Lee this year to produce a piece of artwork to reflect our Reconciliation journey so far. Tammy-Lee also led a staff workshop as part of the Innovate RAP consultation where two pieces of artwork were produced reflecting our staff commitment to Reconciliation.



### Description



*'Across The Dungala' represents the movement of Yorta Yorta people coming and going from Cummeragunja. The Dungala is a big part of who I am and being able to cross and swim it gives me peace.*

**Tammy-Lee Atkinson**

Photo reference: Kaiela Arts



# ACKNOWLEDGEMENT OF TRADITIONAL OWNERS

We, the Greater Shepparton City Council, acknowledge the Yorta Yorta Peoples of the land which now comprises Greater Shepparton. We pay respect to their tribal Elders, we celebrate their continuing Culture and we acknowledge the memory of their ancestors.

## ACKNOWLEDGEMENTS:

Greater Shepparton City Council acknowledges all that have contributed to the development of our *Innovate* Reconciliation Action Plan. It is through the contribution and support of community and key partners that this valued strategic document has been developed and will now be brought to life. Special mention to the following:

- Local First Nations people
- Yorta Yorta Nation Aboriginal Corporation
- Greater Shepparton Reconciliation Action Plan *Innovate* Working Group
- Greater Shepparton Reconciliation Action Plan *Innovate* Project Team
- Shepparton Regional Reconciliation Group
- Reconciliation Australia
- Indigenous Employment Partners

We extend our greatest gratitude to you all.

## LANGUAGE STATEMENT

The term First Nations people is used throughout this document in reference to all Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander people.

Greater Shepparton City Council respects the rights of all Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander people to define themselves.

Traditional Owners or Custodians of the land comprising Greater Shepparton are recognised as the Yorta Yorta people.

**WARNING:** *First Nations people are warned that the following information may contain images and text of deceased persons*





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# MESSAGES OF RECONCILIATION



Reconciliation Australia commends Greater Shepparton City Council on the formal endorsement of its inaugural Innovate Reconciliation Action Plan (RAP).

Commencing an Innovate RAP is a crucial and rewarding period in an organisation's reconciliation journey. It is a time to build strong foundations and relationships, ensuring sustainable, thoughtful, and impactful RAP outcomes into the future.

Since 2006, RAPs have provided a framework for organisations to leverage their structures and diverse spheres of influence to support the national reconciliation movement.

This Innovate RAP is both an opportunity and an invitation for Greater Shepparton City Council to expand its understanding of its core strengths and deepen its relationship with its community, staff, and stakeholders.

By investigating and understanding the integral role it plays across its sphere of influence, Greater Shepparton City Council will create dynamic reconciliation outcomes, supported by and aligned with its business objectives.

An Innovate RAP is the time to strengthen and develop the connections that form the lifeblood of all RAP commitments. The RAP program's framework of relationships, respect, and opportunities emphasises not only the importance of fostering consultation and collaboration with Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander peoples and communities, but also empowering and enabling staff to contribute to this process, as well.

With over 2.3 million people now either working or studying in an organisation with a RAP, the program's potential for impact is greater than ever. Greater Shepparton City Council is part of a strong network of more than 1,100 corporate, government, and not-for-profit organisations that have taken goodwill and intention, and transformed it into action.

Implementing an Innovate RAP signals Greater Shepparton City Council's readiness to develop and strengthen relationships, engage staff and stakeholders in reconciliation, and pilot innovative strategies to ensure effective outcomes.

Getting these steps right will ensure the sustainability of future RAPs and reconciliation initiatives and provide meaningful impact toward Australia's reconciliation journey.

Congratulations Greater Shepparton City Council on your Innovate RAP and I look forward to following your ongoing reconciliation journey.

**Karen Mundine,  
Chief Executive Officer  
Reconciliation Australia**





## Mayor's Message

I am extremely proud to represent a region that has such strong cultural, spiritual and historical ties to First Nations people.

We, the Greater Shepparton City Council, acknowledge the Yorta Yorta Peoples of the land which now comprises Greater Shepparton. We pay respect to their tribal Elders, we celebrate their continuing Culture and we acknowledge the memory of their ancestors.



Greater Shepparton is a diverse community and we are proud that many First Nations people call this region home. It is these strong ties that make it even more important for us as a Council to acknowledge and celebrate the Traditional Owners of the land which now comprises Greater Shepparton, Yorta Yorta Nations.

Council is pleased to be presenting its second *Innovate* Reconciliation Action Plan (RAP) 2023-2025. This next iteration builds upon the work of our first *Reflect* RAP 2019-2020. The RAP *Innovate* outlines actions for advancing Council's vision for reconciliation. It focuses on developing and strengthening relationships, engaging staff and stakeholders in activities that promote reconciliation and developing and piloting innovative strategies to empower First Nations people.

Council are pleased with the progress and understanding achieved through the first RAP *Reflect* and we are looking forward to building on this with our second RAP *Innovate*.

**Cr Shane Sali,**  
**Mayor**

## CEO Message

It gives me great pleasure to present to you our second Reconciliation Action Plan (RAP), *Innovate*.

I acknowledge the Yorta Yorta Peoples of the land which now comprises Greater Shepparton. We pay respect to their tribal Elders, we celebrate their continuing culture and we acknowledge the memory of their ancestors.



I also acknowledge the many First Nations people who reside in Greater Shepparton and call this beautiful region home.

Council's second RAP *Innovate* 2023-2025 is the next step in our important journey towards reconciliation. I would like to thank the many community members and staff who contributed to this document by offering us their time and expertise. This Plan would not have been possible without the voices of these contributors.

In compiling our second RAP, Council spent time reflecting on the learnings and achievements from our first *Reflect* RAP 2019-2020. The first RAP involved reflecting on Council's practices to enable internal organisational changes to take a step towards reconciliation.

While these actions in the *Innovate* RAP are extremely important for us as a Council, they are only a small step. We have a long way to go on our journey and our *Innovate* RAP is one of many significant steps on this journey. The commitments outlined in the *Innovate* RAP will allow us to gain a deeper understanding of our sphere of influence and establish the best approach to move towards reconciliation.

I look forward to seeing this Plan implemented and the positive outcomes achieved from doing so.

**Peter Harriott,**  
**Chief Executive Officer**

# OUR CORE BUSINESS AND SPHERE OF INFLUENCE

Greater Shepparton City Council is governed by nine elected Councillors and operates in accordance with the Local Government Act 2020. As a local government authority, Greater Shepparton City Council exercises a wide range of government functions and powers for the “peace, order and good government” of our municipality.

Greater Shepparton City Council is one of the largest regional councils in Victoria and we strive to achieve our community’s vision of a “Greater Shepparton”. As a local government authority we protect and strengthen Greater Shepparton’s economic prosperity and the health, wellbeing and safety of our residents.

We endeavour to plan and build a connected regional community which is safe, easy to navigate and provides a healthy and prosperous lifestyle, now and into the future. Our purpose is to deliver services, implement strategic initiatives and develop policies and plans that are in the best interests of our community.

We are committed to making a difference in our community and creating a Greater Shepparton that provides access to world-class educational and employment opportunities and health and wellbeing facilities.

Council is one of the region’s largest employers with approximately 850 staff in full-time, part-time and casual roles across a variety of occupations. Council currently employs 17 First Nations employees, although believes the number of First Nations staff is higher with some staff choosing not to disclose. These staff are across all directorates of council.

Greater Shepparton has the largest First Nations population in regional Victoria and values the richness of their culture and history. This richness places us in a unique position to work with local First Nations people and non-First Nations people. Our sphere of influence, as a Local Government authority, provides us with a broad platform to create and promote culturally safe services, buildings, work practices and public spaces.

# DEVELOPING OUR VISION FOR RECONCILIATION

Our Vision for Reconciliation has been developed in consultation with our Reconciliation Action Plan Working Group. The Working Group identified key elements they considered vital to reconciliation. At the recommendation of the Working Group, Neil Morris was engaged to

develop a Vision that reflected the elements identified. Neil worked with other members of the Working Group to ensure the Vision reflects the contribution of all First Nations People living in Greater Shepparton.

## OUR VISION FOR RECONCILIATION

Our Vision for Reconciliation is to walk hand in hand, respectfully with First Nations people of Greater Shepparton to listen deeply and work towards establishing clear actions to support reconciliation within the community.

Our reconciliation work is guided by the principles of self-determination, equality and justice as tools to provide First Nations people with leadership opportunities to continue ongoing healing and growth as a community to achieve meaningful reconciliation.

We acknowledge achieving meaningful reconciliation is a long-term process and will be achieved through strong relationships, respect, opportunities and good governance both now and into the future. First Nations people provide vital knowledge to lead the community in ways to inspire a better future through recognition of cultural connection and understanding of this land.

Through working closely with supporting leadership of First Nations custodians, we will continue to work towards a community that grows and recognises, respects and understands the contribution of all First Nations people within the region as key to our reconciliation journey.

The rich history of the Traditional Custodians of the area that now comprises Greater Shepparton is both powerful and strong and we recognise this land is unceded sovereignty. This history demonstrates ways of living respectfully on woka (country). History demonstrates that the Traditional Custodians have always put the health and prosperity of Country and community central to all aspects of living within this culturally rich landscape that we are fortunate to call home today.

We continue to value and support culturally appropriate processes and ways for current and future generations of our diverse communities within the region to be guided by local First Nations people.

Through our reconciliation actions we commit to fulfilling every possible outcome for our community to walk on a galnya dana (good path) on Yorta Yorta Country.



This image is from the Greater Shepparton Sorry Day Event held in Monash Park. This event is held on an annual basis by Shepparton Region Reconciliation Group.

# TRUTH TELLING

Community consultation identified the need for acknowledgement and Truth Telling of history, with a local context, was essential to working towards reconciliation. We thank Mulana Kaalinya Education Program for their contribution in providing the Truth Telling for our RAP: *Innovate*.

## The Oldest Living Culture

Aboriginal society is known to be the oldest living culture on the planet, but just how old is now the question. Carbon dating has long suggested that we are a culture of approximately 45,000+ years of age. However more recent studies in Victoria and New South Wales have identified three different sites where that figure is now suggested to be 120,000 years of age.

Our Ancestors have lived on this land for many thousands of years, raising generation after generation of children, fathers, mothers, Elders and Leaders, and for the most part, living a life of freedom, self-sufficiency, caring for their land, and practicing their culture and traditions.

Those traditions include traditional healing, medicines, and foods, having respect for their Ancestral lands, caring for our clan/family, supporting our tribe and community, and only ever taking what they needed from the land, to feed their family, clan and tribe.

## Colonisation and its impact

From the time Captain Cook arrived in 1770 and then Governor Arthur Phillip in 1788, Aboriginal life and culture has been significantly ruptured and has spiralled Aboriginal Australia to the point where, according to the United Nations, we now have the worst life expectancy on the planet. In this 'the lucky country' this fact is hard to comprehend.

Even so, our Aboriginal people continue to strive for a life filled with hope, community, culture, family, safety, security - and to be culturally, spiritually, emotionally, and physically well.

Regardless of the impact of colonisation, our rich culture continues today in many forms, and at varying levels depending on the experiences of Aboriginal people and communities across the nation. Ours is a Living Culture.

## Mission Life

Here on Yorta Yorta country our first mission was Maloga Mission established near Barmah in 1874 by Daniel Mathews, a Cornish missionary. This was a place of safe-haven with our people coming and going as they pleased and still able to practice their culture including language, corroboree and healing methods. This mission was different to the others in NSW and Victoria, where Aboriginal people were forcefully placed and oppressed.

Nevertheless in 1888, with the promise of farm blocks that they could farm for themselves, our people moved from Maloga to Cummeragunga Mission, just around the river bend at Barmah. The Governor of NSW made a promise of farm blocks for each man/family, if they agreed to never return to Maloga Mission nor mix with Daniel Mathews who they believed, had been empowering them too much e.g., through education and cultural freedom.

The promise of land was so great, that they decided to move regardless of the restrictions placed on them. When they arrived at Cummeragunga they spent much of their time,

working for the mission manager, or clearing their land by hand in their private time. The land they had been allocated was virtual forest. Once they cleared the land, they started growing food, crops and had cows and a dairy; they started trading their food and wares with others on the mission via Auntie Maggie Nelson's Cummeragunga shop. Life was good.

However, farmers in the district were getting jealous, watching the land being 'wasted on the blacks', and started complaining to the authorities.

In 1907 the Cummeragunga Manager Mr Harris advised the Aboriginal men that their farms were now to be turned over to the Aborigines Protection Board; needless to say, our men and their families were left devastated. They were told that they could work for wages now or leave the mission, but after years of successfully working the land, this was little recompense.

Two Aboriginal missions were based on Yorta Yorta country being Maloga and Cummeragunga Mission - both near Barmah. An Aboriginal reserve was situated at Lake Moodemere near Corowa.

## 1939 The Cummeragunga Walk-off

After years of mistreatment, stolen children, little rations, the loss of farm blocks, breaches of trust, lack of acknowledgement in citizenship and other oppressive acts and policies of the day, the people of Cummeragunga rose-up and walked off the mission to 'freedom', as outlined in Chapter 15 of *Dharmalan Dana*, Nelson and Nelson (2014).

They moved over the river to the town of Barmah in Victoria and six months later, the majority moved to the Flats (opposite what is now Kidstown) between Shepparton and Mooroopna; some moved to Echuca; and others moved back to their own tribal lands in NSW.

Those who settled on the Flats sought work in the fruit and vegetable industry (picking, packing, and canneries) and were always busily employed. Orchardists/Growers would arrive along the causeway every morning to pick up the Aboriginal workers who they knew were reliable and solid workers.

In 1954, Queen Elizabeth II visited this area. With the City Councils [at the time] embarrassed by her possibly observing the Aboriginal people living on the Flats, hessian bag was hung across the causeway from Shepparton to Mooroopna in an attempt to hide them. Following her visit, there was a push for housing for Aboriginal people and this led to Rumbalara housing being opened in 1957 and our people started relocating to the site.

But life wasn't easy at Rumbalara as they again had a caretaker, who controlled who could come and go, whether family could stay overnight, and were closely monitored. Housing was very small, and had no running water, toilets, or heating.

## 1967 Referendum

It wasn't until 1967 and a long fight for our rights by Aboriginal Leaders, that the federal government held a Referendum to amend the Australian Constitution in relation to Aboriginal people being counted as citizens of Australia and as part of the census of the nation.

The referendum sought to alter the following constitution wording as noted in bold italic:-

*51. The Parliament shall, subject to this Constitution, have power to make laws for the peace, order, and good government of the Commonwealth with respect to: -  
...(xxvi) The people of any race, other than the aboriginal people in any State, for whom it is necessary to make special laws.*

*127. In reckoning the numbers of the people of the Commonwealth, or of a State or other part of the Commonwealth, aboriginal natives should not be counted.*

90.77% of the vote agreed to the change with Aboriginal people then being counted in the census, and that we be included as citizens of Australia.

This meant, we were finally to be recognised and counted as citizens of Australia/human beings after 197 years since first contact. This contrasted an era of being excluded from the collective and treated as animals.

## Assimilation and Isolation

In the aftermath of the 1967 referendum, whilst Australia voted to include Aboriginal people in the citizenship and census, little else changed. We then saw Aboriginal people around the nation starting to rise up and demonstrate in the streets seeking better conditions for Aboriginal Australians including land rights, employment, education, health and housing.

In the 1970's Aboriginal families living at Rumbalara started to move into housing across Shepparton and Mooroopna and this meant they finally had equitable housing. However, it also meant that after living together, side by side, from pre-colonisation, to missions, to the Flats and on to Rumbalara – they were now moving into a more socially isolated housing arrangement where families were spread across the area, and now living side by side with non-Aboriginal families.

For some, this was a positive move where they were able to live and work in the broader community; for others, they faced racism and marginalisation, depending on the attitudes of neighbours, schools, teachers, or employers they might come into contact with. Many struggled with social isolation which even today underpins many problems for Elders and families.

## United Nations

Internationally, it is clear that other Indigenous groups who lived through colonisation and its impact, are very similar in their experience. The United Nations (UN) has taken significant steps to make nations more accountable for their treatment of Indigenous people across the planet. See the UN Universal Declaration of Human Rights 1948 and the UN Declaration of the Rights of Indigenous Peoples 2007.

The United Nations Declaration of the Rights of Indigenous Peoples (2006) was adopted by the United Nations General Assembly during its 61st session at UN Headquarters in New York City on 13 September 2007. The Howard Government (Australian Liberal Party) voted against this declaration in 2007. The Rudd government (Australian Labour Party) voted to support it in 2009; but this can be reversed by any government any time.

## Yorta Yorta Nation Aboriginal Corporation

Yorta Yorta Country extends from Shepparton/ Mooroopna and includes Benalla, Wangaratta, Euroa, Rutherglen, Yarrawonga, Corowa, Echuca, Kyabram, Nathalia, Rushworth, and over Murray River to just south of Deniliquin and Jerilderie.



This is the current map highlighting Yorta Yorta Nation as the Traditional Owners of this area. This map has been approved by First Nations Legal and Research Services (Previously known as Native Title Services Victoria (NTSV)) who determine through a lengthy process, who are the traditional owners or who is the Registered Aboriginal Party (RAP) for specific tribal lands.

Yorta Yorta Nation Aboriginal Corporation's core business includes land management, environmental management, cultural heritage, family group support, Elders business and more.



This image is from the Greater Shepparton Illuminate Festival.



# CELEBRATING OUR REFLECT RECONCILIATION ACTION PLAN 2019-2020

The Greater Shepparton *Reflect* RAP 2019-2020, provided the strategic framework to build our organisation's capacity to advance reconciliation and develop collaborative relationships with First Nations people and the broader community. The *Reflect* RAP has helped to create multiple achievements and outputs. Some of which include:

- Council is an active member of the **Shepparton Region Reconciliation Group** which help support First Nations community by providing advocacy, events and raising awareness on important issues. The group includes both First Nations and non-First Nations community members.
- **Council partners** with the group to deliver a variety of activities and initiatives, including an annual Apology Day Breakfast, activities for National Reconciliation Week, acknowledgement of Sorry Day and support for the Wulumbarra Day of Mourning Dawn Service.
- Council is proud to be a signatory to the **Algabonyah Employment Agreement**, which detailed Council's commitment to ensure Council had 2% First Nations people employment by 2020. This was achieved in July 2020 and new target of 5% was set to be worked towards the lifespan of the plan (and beyond).

- **Healing the Spirit Training** – 109 employees have attended between July 2019 and August 2022, with another five sessions booked for the next 12 months. Additional to this, two community Healing of the Spirit sessions were provided as part of NAIDOC week celebrations (2022). These sessions were fully booked and attended by representatives from community groups, organisations and individuals.
- **Closing the Gap** – E learning Module – 73 employees have completed this online learning course over the implementation period of our RAP *Reflect*.

The key learnings and challenges from the Greater Shepparton *Reflect* RAP 2019-2020 that have informed the consultation and development of our *Innovate* RAP include:

- The importance of maintaining and developing strong working relationships with both First Nations people and non-First Nations controlled organisations, individuals and the wider community. Relationships are the key to continuing our reconciliation journey and ensuring our work is responding to community needs and expectations.
- The COVID 19 pandemic and the October 2022 flood event has had a significant impact on our key reconciliation partner's ability to focus on tasks outside of their business as usual. We recognise, respect and value the core work of our key reconciliation partners is to support their communities. We will continue to building strong working relationships with our key partners to support their vital work and build reconciliation.



## Case Study 1 - Smoking and cleansing ceremony in Shepparton for local healing

**Case study: Smoking and cleansing ceremony in Shepparton for local healing**

**Reference – Victorian Aboriginal and Local Government Strategy – 2021-2026**

A smoking and cleansing ceremony was held in Shepparton to publicly acknowledge the culturally significant burial site on which the council offices had been built, on the traditional lands of the Yorta Yorta people.

Smoking ceremonies are an ancient custom among many Aboriginal communities. Native plants are smouldered to produce smoke that has cleansing properties to ward off bad spirits. Some Aboriginal healing practitioners also use smoking ceremonies for healing, spiritual renewal and strength. The ceremonies are rituals of purification and unity and Aboriginal People with specialised cultural knowledge undertake them. Given the ceremony's significance, it's usually only performed at events that local Aboriginal communities regard as appropriate.

Yorta Yorta People had for years explained the historic and cultural significance of the Council site, and their distress and reluctance to enter the offices. The failure to address this issue had prevented the Yorta Yorta community from being fully integrated into their local Council's daily work and decision making.

Representatives of the Yorta Yorta People led the cleansing and smoking ceremony and performed it in line with their traditional cultural practices. It began in the local Queens Gardens where the CEO welcomed everyone and acknowledged the Traditional Owners. The Mayor then made brief remarks before a Yorta Yorta Elder led those gathered in a minute's silence. A Yorta Yorta Elder unveiled a plaque to be placed on the wall at the entrance of the council offices, acknowledging the site's historic and cultural significance. A representative of the Yorta Yorta Nation then began the smoking and cleansing ceremony, walking from the gardens to the Council offices.

The ceremony and laying of the plaque demonstrates Greater Shepparton City Council's commitment to collaborate with Traditional Owners, acknowledge the truth of Australia's history and build a shared future.



# RECONCILIATION ACTION PLANS:

## The RAP Framework

There are four RAP types an organisation can develop - Reflect, Innovate, Stretch and Elevate. Each type of RAP is designed to suit an organisation at different stages of their reconciliation journey and organisations can repeat the same type of RAP if appropriate.

Reconciliation Australia provides organisations with templates, advice and support to develop their RAP framework. Reconciliation Australia provides a final endorsement of an organisation's RAP.

Our RAP is an *Innovate* RAP. An *Innovate* RAP focuses on developing and strengthening relationships with First Nations people, engaging staff and stakeholders in reconciliation, and developing and piloting innovative strategies to empower First Nations people.

Our *Innovate* RAP will run for a period of two years and contains specific actions to meet the objectives set out by Reconciliation Australia.

## Development of our Reconciliation Action Plan *Innovate*

Greater Shepparton has the largest First Nations population in regional Victoria and values the richness of their culture and history. The *Innovate* RAP provides a strategic framework to recognise, support and work with local First Nations people on opportunities and pathways as part of our reconciliation journey.

## RAP Leadership

### Greater Shepparton Reconciliation Action Plan Working Group

The Greater Shepparton Reconciliation Action Plan Working Group is chaired by the Director Community at Greater Shepparton City Council and supported by Council's Aboriginal Engagement Officer. The purpose of the Group was to inform the development of the *Innovate* RAP 2023-2025 through collaboration, communication and positive relationships. Of the 20 Working Group members, 10 of these members identify as First Nations People.

The Greater Shepparton Reconciliation Action Plan Working Group comprises of the following members:

#### External Partners:

Organisation	Position
Rumbalara Aboriginal Cooperative	Rumbalara Board Member
Shepparton Region Reconciliation Group	Co-Convenors
Bangerang Culture Centre	Executive Officer
Kaiela Arts	Chief Executive Officer
Wulumbarra	Aboriginal Officers
Ethnic Council of Shepparton & District	Manager
Goulburn Ovens Institute of TAFE	Coordinator – Koorie Unit
Greater Shepparton Secondary College	Senior Koorie Education Advisor
Sandhurst Catholic Education	Senior Aboriginal Education Officer
Hume Regional Aboriginal Justice Advisory Committee	Chairperson
Victoria Police	Aboriginal Community Liaison Officer

#### Internal Staff:

Position	Department
Director	Community – RAP Working Group Champion
Manager	Community Wellbeing
Aboriginal Engagement Officer	Community Wellbeing
Team Leader	Community Wellbeing
Coordinator	Active Living
Investment Facilitation Coordinator	Economic Development
Team Leader – Visitor Economy	Economic Development
Coordinator	Family and Children's Services
Team Leader	Landscaping and Native Open Space

*A special thanks to Robynne Nelson, Mulana Kaalinya for her support, advice and content in the development of the Truth Telling section of our Innovate RAP. Robynne has encouraged and sought consultation into our Innovate RAP from community participants at her Healing the Spirit Cultural Awareness Program throughout 2021 and 2022.*



This image is of Neil Morris of Still Here Arts & Culture.

## Greater Shepparton Reconciliation Action Plan Innovate Project Team

The Project Team met throughout 2021, with the Chief Executive Officer as the RAP Champion. This Group was internally lead and responsible for reviewing the Greater Shepparton *Reflect* RAP and setting the timelines and process for the development of the *Innovate* RAP.

Position	Department
Chief Executive Officer	Greater Shepparton City Council
Director	Community
Manager	Community Wellbeing
Manager	Active Living
Manager	Economic Development
Team Leader	Community Wellbeing
Team Leader	Economic Development
Team Leader	Marketing and Communications
Aboriginal Engagement Officer	Community Wellbeing
Project Officer	River Care Connect
Coordinator	Community Development

## Consultation with Traditional Owner Group Yorta Yorta Nation Aboriginal Corporation

On the 10 November 2020, the Greater Shepparton City Council signed a Memorandum of Understanding (MOU) with the recognised Traditional Owner Group, Yorta Yorta Nation Aboriginal Corporation (YYNAC). This relationship had been long desired by both parties to recognise the importance of the Yorta Yorta People, to help facilitate the ongoing process and support of reconciliation and First Nations people self-determination within Greater Shepparton.

We are committed to continuously improving the development and enriching of the relationship between Council and YYNAC. We do this through a deep understanding and respect of the priorities of YYNAC. We recognise the significant work of YYNAC to support community through the COVID-19 pandemic, October 2022 Flood Event and land and heritage management which have been key priorities. We appreciate and thank the participation that Yorta Yorta Nation Aboriginal Corporation has had thus far throughout this Reconciliation Action Plan Process.

# DEVELOPING OUR RECONCILIATION ACTION PLAN

Over 380 people provided input to the development of the *Innovate* RAP through the following consultation opportunities from September 2021 – October 2022;

- Shaping Greater Shepparton website
- Cultural conversations
- Internal and external workshops with staff and community
- Mulana Kaalinya - Healing the Spirit cultural awareness training workshops
- RAP consultation postcards and feedback boxes placed in First Nations and non- First Nations people controlled agencies.

A feature of our consultation was the development and distribution of a RAP postcard with two questions:

- What does Reconciliation mean to you?
- How can Council make Reconciliation matter?

Emerging themes from the community consultation have provided a foundation for the development of the Actions within this Plan. These community themes are considered essential to demonstrate the deep listening that occurred during the community consultation phases.







These community themes have been matched against the Reconciliation Australia Innovate RAP Pillars of: *Relationships, Respect, Opportunities and Governance*.

These are the core pillars to which organisations assign their RAP actions. The following descriptions inform organisations of the type of actions to place under each pillar:

**Relationships:** Actions on how the organisation will build, strengthen, and support relationships between the broader Australian community and local First Nations people, and relationships focused on advancing reconciliation.

**Respect:** Actions relating to how the organisation will support the broader understanding of and respect for all First Nations people, cultures, histories, acknowledgements and rights.

**Opportunities:** Actions relating to how the organisation will increase equal and equitable opportunities and participation for First Nations people.

## Consultation timeline

- January – December 2021**  
Meetings of Greater Shepparton Reconciliation Action Plan Innovate Project Team
- 20 September 2021 – 29 January 2022**  
1st phase – Public consultation period to develop initial themes and actions
- July – October 2022**  
2nd phase – Public consultation to review and refine themes and actions
- December 2022 – Reconciliation Australia granted extension**  
Reconciliation Australia granted Greater Shepparton City Council an extension for the delivery of the actions in Council's Reconciliation Action Plan in light of the impacts of COVID-19.
- October 2022 – February 2023**  
Meetings of Greater Shepparton Reconciliation Action Plan Working Group
- March 2023 – June 2023**  
Council endorsement RAP  
Reconciliation Australia's RAP Final Endorsement.  
RAP is published and RAP implementation commences.

# THE FIVE DIMENSIONS OF RECONCILIATION

Reconciliation Australia's vision of reconciliation is based and measured on five dimensions: historical acceptance; race relations; equality and equity; institutional integrity and unity.

## Dimension Definitions

### Race Relations

All Australians understand and value Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander and non-Indigenous cultures, rights and experiences, which results in stronger relationships based on trust and respect and that are free of racism.

### Equality and Equity

Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander people participate equally in a range of life opportunities and the unique rights of Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander people are recognised and upheld.

### Institutional Integrity

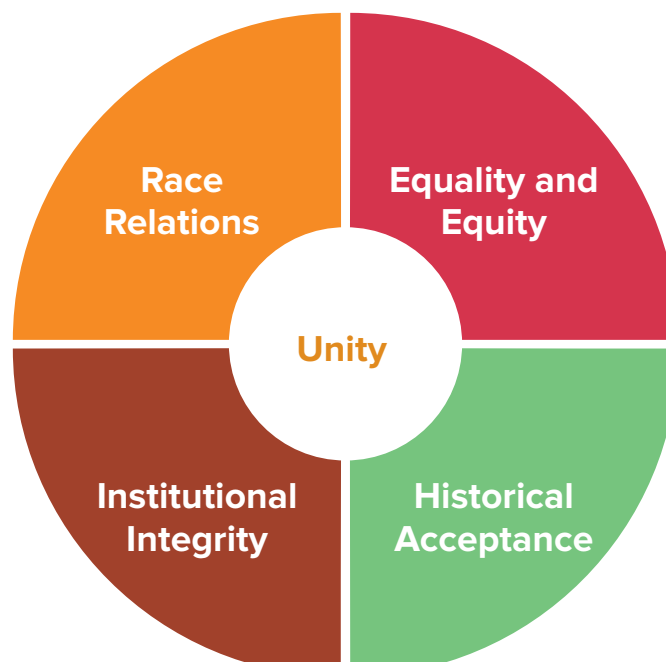
The active support of reconciliation by the nation's political, business and community structures.

### Unity

An Australian society that values and recognises Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander cultures and heritage as a proud part of a shared national identity.

### Historical Acceptance

All Australians understand and accept the wrongs of the past and their impact on Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander people. Australia makes amends for past policies and practices ensures these wrongs are never repeated.



# RAP EVALUATION, REVIEW AND REPORTING.

Greater Shepparton City Council is committed to supporting First Nations people led evaluation and review process of all RAP developments. Council's Reconciliation Working Group (RWG) will be invited to fulfil the role of Council's RAP Working Group. The group consists of 20 members and which include 9 First Nations people.

An Evaluation Framework will be developed in collaboration with the RWG to ensure our *Innovate* RAP is reviewed and measured against the following:

- Council's goals and strategies
- Reconciliation Australia's Five Dimensions of Reconciliation
- Council Plan themes and strategies.

Reconciliation Australia also requires Greater Shepparton City Council to report on its efforts to develop innovative strategies for advancing reconciliation in Council's workplace and across the municipality.

Key to satisfying Reconciliation Australia's *Innovate* RAP reporting requirements, Council and the RWG will work together to meet the following:

1. Complete and submit Reconciliation Australia's annual RAP Impact Measurement Questionnaire.
2. Report on RAP Progress to Council staff and senior leaders on a quarterly basis.
3. Publicly report on Council's RAP achievements, challenges and learnings annually.
4. Take part in Reconciliation Australia's biennial Workplace RAP Barometer.
5. As per RWG terms of reference, RWG will meet on a quarterly basis to review RAP developments and provide appropriate support and guidance to assist with RAP decision-making and the implementation of the plan. Council will also work with the RWG to receive ongoing guidance on the mechanics of First Nations people led evaluation and review processes to strengthen Council's cultural capabilities and systems.



Yorta Yorta Elder, performing traditional dance



This image is part of Aunty Geraldine Briggs and Aunty Elizabeth Morgan and is part of the Greater Shepparton Aboriginal Street Art Project.

# OUR RECONCILIATION ACTION PLAN 2023 TO 2025



## RELATIONSHIPS

*Strong, respectful and meaningful relationships between Greater Shepparton City Council and First Nations people are the foundation of this Reconciliation Action Plan. We strive to build on already established connections with the Local First Nations communities and Traditional Custodians, the Yorta Yorta Nations, and are guided by their profound knowledge in reaching reconciliation within our community together.*

ACTION	DELIVERABLE	TIMELINE	RESPONSIBILITY
1. Establish and maintain mutually beneficial relationships with First Nations people stakeholders and organisations.	1.1 Meet with First Nations people stakeholders and organisations to develop guiding principles for future engagement.	September 2023	Director – Community
	1.2 Develop and implement an engagement plan to work with First Nations people stakeholders and organisations.	October 2023	Team Leader - Diversity
	1.3 Explore opportunities to work with and provide resources/support to Yorta Yorta Nation Aboriginal Corporation to respond to Council matters.	October 2023	Director Community
	1.4 Review the Greater Shepparton City Council and Yorta Yorta Nation Aboriginal Corporation Memorandum of Understanding (MOU) and establish mechanisms to embed the MOU into organisational practice.	November 2024	Team Leader - Diversity
	1.5 Investigate the establishment of a First Nations people Advisory Group to Council, with the purpose to provide advice on the transfer of power, resources and self determination to community.	February 2024	Team Leader - Diversity Aboriginal Engagement Officer

\*Timelines indicate planned commencement date for deliverables

ACTION	DELIVERABLE	TIMELINE	RESPONSIBILITY
2 Build relationships through celebrating National Reconciliation Week (NRW).	2.1 RAP Working Group members to participate in an external NRW event.	27 May – 3 June 2023, 2024, 2025	Aboriginal Engagement Officer
	2.2 Encourage and support staff and senior leaders to participate in at least one external event to recognise and celebrate NRW.	27 May – 3 June 2023, 2024, 2025	Lead: Chief Executive Officer, Support: Director Infrastructure, Director Community, Director Corporate Services, Director Sustainable Development
	2.3 Organise at least one NRW event each year.	27 May – 3 June 2023, 2024, 2025	Aboriginal Engagement Officer
	2.4 Register all our NRW events on Reconciliation Australia's NRW website.	May 2024, 2025	Aboriginal Engagement Officer
	2.5 Support an external NRW event with key local partners.	June 2024, 2025	Aboriginal Engagement Officer
	2.6 Circulate Reconciliation Australia's National Reconciliation Week resources and reconciliation materials to our staff.	May 2024, 2025	Aboriginal Engagement Officer
3 Promote reconciliation through our sphere of influence.	3.1 Develop and implement a staff engagement strategy to raise awareness of reconciliation across our workforce.	February 2024	Manager Marketing Communications
	3.2 Communicate our commitment to reconciliation publicly.	July 2024, 2025	Lead: Chief Executive Officer Support: Director Infrastructure, Director Community, Director Corporate Services, Director Sustainable Development
	3.3 Review partnership Agreement with the Shepparton Region Reconciliation Group to formalise our support of their programs and activities.	December 2023, 2024	Aboriginal Engagement Officer
	3.4 Explore opportunities to positively influence our external stakeholders to drive reconciliation outcomes.	June 2023, 2024, 2025	Aboriginal Engagement Officer
	3.5 Collaborate with RAP organisations and other like-minded organisations to develop innovative approaches to advance reconciliation.	July 2023	Manager - Community Wellbeing
	3.6 Aboriginal Engagement Officer to attend the Reconciliation Australia's National RAP Conference.	July 2023	Aboriginal Engagement Officer
	3.7 Empower all members of Executive and Senior Management to be Reconciliation Champions, through linking RAP actions to Key Performance Indicators.	July 2023	Chief Executive Officer



ACTION	DELIVERABLE	TIMELINE	RESPONSIBILITY
4 Promote positive race relations through anti-discrimination strategies.	4.1 Conduct a review of People & Development policies and procedures to identify existing anti-discrimination provisions, and future needs.	March 2024	Aboriginal Engagement Officer
	4.2 Update People & Development policies to ensure anti-discrimination measures are up to date.	December 2023	Chief Executive Officer
	4.3 Develop, implement, and communicate an anti-discrimination policy for our organisation.	July 2024	Manager – People and Development
	4.4 Engage First Nations people staff or advisors to consult on our anti-discrimination policy.	July 2023	Manager – People and Development
	4.5 Educate senior leaders on the effects of racism through support of and participation in truth telling and reconciliation activities and events.	September 2024	Manager – People and Development



*GSCC respect and acknowledges the traditions and customs of local First Nations people and their strong connection with Country and recognise the importance of their cultures and histories. Consultation with local First Nations people and communities will help to contribute extensive knowledge to our protocols and procedures and deepen the organisation's connections with community to identify and help develop more opportunities for respectful cultural awareness among all our staff, executive and Councillors.*

ACTION	DELIVERABLE	TIMELINE	RESPONSIBILITY
5 Increase understanding, value and recognition of First Nations people cultures, histories, knowledge and rights through cultural learning.	5.1 Consult local Traditional Owners and/or First Nations advisors to inform our cultural learning strategy.	November 2023	Manager – People and Development
	5.2 Develop customised cultural awareness training program for all staff including face to face and online learning and cultural immersions.	July 2024	Manger – People and Development
	5.3 Review the cultural learning needs within our organisation to inform the ongoing improvement of our First Nations Cultural Awareness Training Strategy.	January 2024	Manager – People and Development
	5.4 Provide opportunities for RAP Working Group members, Councillors, Executive Leadership, and other key leadership staff to participate in formal and structured cultural learning.	November 2023, 2024	Manager – People and Development Aboriginal Engagement Officer
	5.5 Review, update and communicate our cultural learning strategy document to all staff.	November 2023	Manager – People and Development Aboriginal Engagement Officer
	5.6 Promote Reconciliation Australia's Share Our Pride online tool to all staff.	May 2024, 2025	Aboriginal Engagement Officer
	5.7 Introduce cultural training be a mandatory part of Council induction.	December 2023	Manager – People and Development
6 Increase the cultural safety of our work practices and processes for First Nations people.	6.1 Investigate and implement initiatives to further embed First Nations cultures into Council processes including hosting meetings on Country.	November 2023, 2024, 2025	Manager – Corporate Governance Support: Team Leader – Diversity Aboriginal Engagement Officer
	6.2 Identify and share resources for Managers and Supervisors to utilise to support staff and community throughout 'Sorry Business'.	February 2024	Team Leader – Diversity Aboriginal Engagement Officer

ACTION	DELIVERABLE	TIMELINE	RESPONSIBILITY
7 Demonstrate respect to First Nations people by observing cultural protocols.	7.1 Increase the understanding and appreciation of staff and volunteers of Council of the purpose and significance behind cultural protocols, including Acknowledgement of Country and Welcome to Country protocols.	July 2025	Lead: Chief Executive Officer Support: Director Infrastructure, Director Community, Director Corporate Services, Director Sustainable Development.
	7.2 Develop, implement and communicate a cultural protocol document, including protocols for Welcome to Country and Acknowledgement of Country.	April 2024	Team Leader - Diversity
	7.3 Invite local Traditional Owners from Yorta Yorta Nation Aboriginal Corporation to provide a Welcome to Country or other appropriate cultural protocol at significant events each year.	July 2023	Lead: Chief Executive Officer Support: Director Infrastructure, Director Community, Director Corporate Services, Director Sustainable Development.
	7.4 Include an Acknowledgement of Country or other appropriate protocols at the commencement of internal and external important meetings.	July 2024, 2025	Lead: Chief Executive Officer Support: Director Infrastructure, Director Community, Director Corporate Services, Director Sustainable Development.
	7.5 Advocate for the inclusion of Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander flags at war memorial locations across Greater Shepparton.	December 2024	Lead: Chief Executive Officer Support: Director – Community, Aboriginal Engagement Officer
	7.6 Display Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander flags in our places of meeting.	January 2024	Manager - Governance
8 Build respect for First Nations people cultures and histories by celebrating NAIDOC Week.	8.1 RAP Working Group to participate in an external NAIDOC Week event.	July 2023, 2024	Aboriginal Engagement Officer
	8.2 Review People and Development policies and procedures to ensure there are no barriers to staff participating in NAIDOC Week.	March 2024, 2025	Manager – People and Development
	8.3 Promote and encourage participation in external NAIDOC events to all staff.	July 2023, 2024, 2025	Aboriginal Engagement Officer
	8.4 Consult and work with First Nations people to hold an internal and external NAIDOC Week event.	May 2024,2025	Aboriginal Engagement Officer

ACTION	DELIVERABLE	TIMELINE	RESPONSIBILITY
9 Advocate, Celebrate and recognise First Nations people dates of significance.	9.1 Continue to support the Shepparton Region Reconciliation Group delivery of First Nations people dates of significance including Sorry Day and Apology Breakfast.	January 2024	Aboriginal Engagement Officer
	9.2 Advocate to the Australian Government to change the date of Australia Day from January 26.	July 2023, 2024, 2025	Lead: Chief Executive Officer Support: Director Infrastructure, Director Community, Director Corporate Services, Director Sustainable Development.
	9.3 Lower the Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander flags to half-mast on 26 January at all council-owned facilities to acknowledge this date as a day of mourning for First Nations people.	January 2024, 2025	Team Leader – Diversity Aboriginal Engagement Officer
	9.4 Continue to provide financial and in-kind support for the 'Day of Mourning Dawn Ceremony' and recognition of this event in Council communications.	January 2024, 2025	Team Leader – Diversity Aboriginal Engagement Officer
	9.5 Continue community engagement to inform a Council decision about: a) Australia Day in 2024 and beyond b) The development of a program proposal for a day of community celebration for 2024, that is not held on 26 January, that is inclusive, reflects the full history of Australia, and is culturally respectful.	July 2023	Team Leader – Diversity Aboriginal Engagement Officer
	9.6 Investigate the option for Council staff to choose to take January 26 as a public holiday.	August 2023	Manager – People and Development
	9.7 Investigate and advise the use of our facilities and assets to increase community awareness of First Nations people dates of significance, e.g. flag poles, lighting up of our buildings etc.	July 2025	Team Leader-Diversity, Aboriginal Engagement Officer
10 Increase Councillors awareness and understanding of First Nations cultures and local First Nations communities needs.	10.1 All Councillors to participate in face to face cultural awareness training and cultural capability training.	May 2024	Manager - Governance
	10.2 Present topics of interest and concern to First Nations communities to Councillors for their consideration and/or action.	July 2025	Director - Community
11 Reconnise, respect and protect First Nations peoples Cultural Heritage in Greater Shepparton.	11.1 Undertake a Cultural Land Value Study to identify land of cultural significance that informs the development of, and training in a cultural heritage procedure to allow staff and community to identify and protect significant sites.	December 2023	Director - Community

ACTION	DELIVERABLE	TIMELINE	RESPONSIBILITY
	11.2 Establish a working group with both internal and external partners to explore opportunities for land transfer and cultural land management.	December 2023	Director -Community
	11.3 Continue to support the work of the Traditional Owners Caring for Country Project with Yorta Yorta Nation Aboriginal Corporation and Goulburn Broken Catchment Authority.	July 2023, 2024	Manager – Environment
	11.4 Continue the work with Cussen Park Advisory Committee on grassland management in a culturally appropriate way.	July 2023, 2024	Manager – Environment
	11.5 Continue to educate staff on and support the implementation of the Yorta Yorta Nation Aboriginal Corporation <i>Whole of Country Plan</i> .	July 2023, 2024	Manager – Environment
	11.6 Work with key First Nations people partners on the implementation of the Greater Shepparton Climate Action Plan.	July 2023	Manager – Environment
	11.7 Investigate the introduction of First Nations people memorial sites to recognise places of significance through the municipality.	December 2023	Manager - Planning
	11.8 Work with Yorta Yorta Nation Aboriginal Corporation to create place name protocols and implement through the renaming of our parks and gardens, tracks, waterways, signage, buildings and public spaces.	July 2024	Aboriginal Engagement Officer
	11.9 Provide resources and information for community to access First Nations cultural education.	July 2024	Aboriginal Engagement Officer Whole of organisation
	11.10 Explore options for Daish’s Paddock to be an immersive First Nations cultural experience that acknowledges and celebrates the true history of the land.	July 2025	Director Community
12 Use key Council strategies and action plans as tools to work with First Nations people artists and community/arts groups to promote and support First Nations people arts and cultures.	12.1 Work with the GSCCS Creative Cities Coordinator to identify opportunities for collaboration with the Greater Shepparton Creative Cities Strategy to develop First Nations Artists.	August 2023, 2024	Manager – Performing Arts
	12.2 Include First Nations people cultural component in all Council festivals and events.	December 2023, 2024	Manager – Economic Development
	12.3 Develop and implement local Recovery Plans to include actions that respond to the Victorian Government State Emergency Management Plan pillar of recovery - Aboriginal Culture and Healing to help to prioritise culture, address trauma, support healing and promote cultural safety.	July 2023, 2024, 2025	Emergency Management Coordinator Aboriginal Culture and Healing Officer



# OPPORTUNITIES

*As one of the largest First Nations people populations within Regional Victoria, we are committed to continuously improving and reviewing Council plans, policies and procedures to create culturally safety and equitable opportunities. We are committed to sustaining and building relationships and partnerships with First Nations organisations to benefit local First Nations people.*

ACTION	DELIVERABLE	TIMELINE	RESPONSIBILITY
13 Improve employment outcomes by increasing First Nations people recruitment, retention, and professional development.	13.1 Build understanding of current First Nations staffing to inform future employment and professional development opportunities.	August 2023	Team Leader - People and Workforce
	13.2 Engage with First Nations staff to consult on our recruitment, retention and professional development strategy.	February 2024	Team Leader - People and Workforce
	13.3 Continue to review and implement Councils Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander recruitment and retention Employment Strategy.	July 2023	Manager – People and Development
	13.4 Advertise job vacancies to effectively reach First Nations stakeholders.	July 2023	Team Leader - People and Workforce
	13.5 Review HR and recruitment procedures and policies to remove barriers to First Nations participation in our workplace.	February 2024	Manager – People and Development
	13.6 Ensure that an Acknowledgement of Country is included at the commencement of all job interviews.	July 2023	Manager – People and Development
	13.7 Include in all job advertisements, 'First Nations people are encouraged to apply.'	July 2023	Manager – People and Development
	13.8 Increase the percentage of First Nations people employed by Council to 5% and above.	July 2025	Manager – People and Development
	13.9 Support leadership opportunities for First Nations people staff by: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• providing opportunities and support to act in higher roles.</li> <li>• encouraging participation in leadership development programs.</li> <li>• formal mentoring programs/ opportunities.</li> </ul>	July 2023	Manager – People and Development

ACTION	DELIVERABLE	TIMELINE	RESPONSIBILITY
14 Increase First Nations people supplier diversity to support improved economic and social outcomes.	14.1 Develop and implement a First Nations procurement strategy.	July 2024	Team Leader – Contracts and Procurement
	14.2 Investigate Supply Nation membership.	July 2023	Team Leader – Contracts and Procurement
	14.3 Develop and communicate opportunities for procurement of goods, services and expertise from First Nations businesses to staff.	October 2023	Team Leader – Contracts and Procurement
	14.4 Review and update procurement practices to remove barriers to procuring goods and services from First Nations businesses.	August 2023	Team Leader – Contracts and Procurement
	14.5 Develop commercial relationships with First Nations businesses.	July 2024	Team Leader – Contracts and Procurement
15 Continue to support the implementation of the Goulburn Murray Regional Prosperity Plan which aims to build a thriving First Nations economy.	15.1 Council to continue its role of a Goulburn Murray Regional Prosperity Plan Champion to lead and partner on allocated initiatives focused on building a First Nations economy.	July 2025	Lead: Chief Executive Officer Support: Director - Community, Aboriginal Engagement Officer
	15.2 Continue to support the development of the Munarra Centre for Regional Excellence. The Munarra Centre will be a centre for excellence in the areas of Education, Accommodation, Performing Arts, Healthcare and Child Care to help close the gap for First Nations people.	July 2025	Director – Community Aboriginal Engagement Officer



Lin Onus - The Land Within, installation view. Shepparton Art Museum, 2021. Image - Christian Capurro, courtesy Shepparton Art Museum. Works courtesy Lin Onus Estate



## GOVERNANCE

*GSCC acknowledges good governance is key to building a safe, resilient and sustainable community and is key to the governance and structure on how we embed culturally appropriate processes into our systems.*

ACTION	DELIVERABLE	TIMELINE	RESPONSIBILITY
16 Establish and maintain an effective RAP Working group (RWG) to drive governance of the RAP.	16.1 Maintain First Nations representation on the RWG.	February, May, August, December 2023, 2024	Aboriginal Engagement Officer
	16.2 Establish and apply a Terms of Reference for the RWG.	July 2023	Aboriginal Engagement Officer
	16.3 Meet at least four times per year to drive and monitor RAP implementation.	February, May, August, December 2023,2024	Lead: Aboriginal Engagement Officer Support: RAP Working Group.
17 Provide appropriate support for effective implementation of RAP commitments.	17.1 Define resource needs for RAP implementation.	July 2023	Team Leader – Diversity
	17.2 Engage our senior leaders and other staff in the delivery of RAP commitments.	August 2023	Lead: Chief Executive Officer Support: Director Infrastructure, Director Community, Director Corporate Services, Director Sustainable Development.
	17.3 Define and maintain appropriate systems to track, measure and report on RAP commitments.	September 2023	Team Leader – Diversity
	17.4 Appoint and maintain an internal RAP Champion from senior management.	July 2023	Lead: Chief Executive Officer Support: Director Infrastructure, Director Community, Director Corporate Services, Director Sustainable Development.



ACTION	DELIVERABLE	TIMELINE	RESPONSIBILITY
18 Build accountability and transparency through reporting RAP achievements, challenges and learnings both internally and externally.	18.1 Contact Reconciliation Australia to verify that our primary and secondary contact details are up to date, to ensure we do not miss out on important RAP correspondence.	July 2023, 2024	Support: Director Infrastructure, Director Community, Director Corporate Services, Director Sustainable Development.
	18.2 Contact Reconciliation Australia to request our unique link, to access the online RAP Impact Measurement Questionnaire.	August 2023, 2024	Aboriginal Engagement Officer
	18.3 Complete and submit the annual RAP Impact Measurement Questionnaire to Reconciliation Australia.	September 2023, 2024	Aboriginal Engagement Officer
	18.4 Report RAP progress to all staff and senior leaders quarterly.	September, December, March, June 2023,2024,2025	Lead: Chief Executive Officer Support: Director Infrastructure, Director Community, Director Corporate Services, Director Sustainable Development.
	18.5 Publicly report our RAP achievements, challenges and learnings, annually.	October 2023, 2024	Lead: Chief Executive Officer Support: Director Infrastructure, Director Community, Director Corporate Services, Director Sustainable Development.
	18.6 Investigate participating in Reconciliation Australia's biennial Workplace RAP Barometer.	March 2024	Aboriginal Engagement Officer
	18.7 Submit a traffic light report to Reconciliation Australia at the conclusion of this RAP.	March 2025	Aboriginal Engagement Officer
19 Continue our reconciliation journey by developing our next RAP.	19.1 Register via Reconciliation Australia's <a href="#">website</a> to begin developing our next RAP.	December 2024	Aboriginal Engagement Officer

# OUR OVERARCHING GUIDANCE

Council considered a number of key documents, strategies and policy statements to provide context and help guide the development of our *Innovate* Reconciliation Action Plan.

## [Reconciliation Australia](#)

Reconciliation Australia is the lead body for reconciliation in Australia.

## [Victorian Aboriginal and Local Government Strategy 2021-2026](#)

Pathway to Stronger Partnerships' - Yuma Yirramboi sets out a road map to greater economic participation and wealth creation for Aboriginal Victorians. Development of the Strategy was driven by us, the Koori Caucus of the Victorian Aboriginal Employment and Economic Council (VAEEC), on behalf of Aboriginal Victorians.

## [The Uluru Statement from the Heart](#)

The 'Uluru Statement from the Heart' called for substantive constitutional change and structural reform, and sought a Makarrata Commission

## [The United Nations Declaration of Indigenous People](#)

Establishes a universal framework of minimum standards for the survival, dignity and well-being of the indigenous peoples of the world and elaborates on existing human right standards.

## [The Victorian Charter of Human Rights and Responsibilities Act 2006](#)

A Victorian law that sets out the basic rights, freedoms and responsibilities of all people in Victoria. It is about the relationship between government and the people it serves.

## [Victorian Government Self Determination Reform Framework](#)

In 2018, the Victorian Government refreshed the Victorian Aboriginal Affairs Framework 2018-2023 (VAAF) in partnership with Aboriginal Victorians through broad and inclusive engagement. The VAAF is Victoria's overarching strategic framework for working with Aboriginal Victorians to drive improved outcomes.

## [Yorta Yorta Nation Aboriginal Corporation Whole of Country Plan](#)

A document built on thousands of years of knowledge and existence in our Yorta Yorta Traditional Boundary. It reflects a long struggle to have our voice reflected in the protection of our country, our people and our culture.

## [Munarra Centre for Regional Excellence \(MCRE\)](#)

The MCRE will be a state-of-the-art nationally-significant centre designed as a hub of connection and transformation for First Nations and non-First Nations people across Australia. It is intended that the MCRE complex will be run by Indigenous-led Munarra Limited, a not-for-profit entity that is a partnership of Rumbalara Football and Netball Club, the University of Melbourne and Kaiela Institute. The MCRE will provide a place and space of cultural affirmation, identity and strength with national pathways and a university campus, providing a culturally safe space for multiple education and training providers (e.g. University of Melbourne, La Trobe University and GOTAFE).

[Goulburn Murray Regional Prosperity Plan](#) – The vision of this plan is to generate a thriving and sustainable First Nations economy through a shared prosperity model that delivers an additional \$150m GRP per annum by 2036 for the Goulburn Murray Region.

## [Algabonyah Employment Partnership Agreement](#)

The purpose of the agreement is to build the prosperity of the Goulburn-Murray region, with a growing inclusive community.

## [Shepparton Region Reconciliation Group](#)

Supports First Nations community by providing advocacy, events and raising awareness on important issues. The group includes both First Nations and non-First Nations community members.

[Mulana Kaalinya Healing the Spirit](#) – specialises in First Nations Cultural Competency Training, programs and services to empower, inspire, engage, support and encourage all that join us on the journey.





Council has examined internal policies and procedures, as well as strategic planning documents, to ensure continuous and ongoing consideration of First Nations people across all Directorates and Council services.



## CONTACT US

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**Web:** [www.greatershepparton.com.au](http://www.greatershepparton.com.au)

Join the conversation:    

Greater Shepparton City Council is NRS friendly. If you are deaf, hearing-impaired, or speech-impaired, we ask that you call us via the National Relay Service:

**TTY users:** 133 677 then ask for (03) 5832 9700.

**Speak & Listen users:** (speech-to-speech relay) 1300 555 727 then ask for (03) 5832 9700.

**Internet relay users:** Connect to the National Relay Service via [www.relayservice.com.au](http://www.relayservice.com.au) and then ask for (03) 5832 9700.

A hearing loop is also available at Council's customer service centre and Council meeting rooms.



Interpreter service available.



# Greater Shepparton City Council Reconciliation Action Plan (RAP) Working Group 2023-2025 Terms of Reference

*We, the Greater Shepparton City Council, acknowledge the Yorta Yorta Peoples of the land which now comprises Greater Shepparton. We pay respect to their tribal Elders, we celebrate their continuing culture and we acknowledge the memory of their ancestors.*

## 1. Purpose

The purpose of the Greater Shepparton City Council (GSCC) Reconciliation Action Plan (RAP) Working Group (the Group) is to guide the implementation of the GSCC RAP Innovate 2023-2025 through collaboration, communication and positive relationships.

The RAP outlines Council's commitment to reconciliation and ensuring First Nations cultures are respected, acknowledged and celebrated.

## 2. Function

The function of the Group is to:

- play an active role in the managing and monitoring the implementation of the Reconciliation Action Plan: Innovate 2023/2025;
- raise and promote awareness, concerns and issues facing First Nations community in relation to the RAP;
- promote and share collaboration opportunities for reconciliation;
- provide advice and feedback to Council on key proposals, strategies and implementation.

## 3. Membership

GSCC will appoint a maximum of twelve (12) members, comprising of First Nation and non-First Nation people to be on the Group. Members will be selected on the following criteria:

- committed to reconciliation;
- willingness to connect with First Nations people;
- connection with community.

The Group will reflect the diverse community of our municipality. An intersectionality lens will be applied in the recruitment and appointment of members.

Members will be appointed for a period of three (3) years. GSCC may at any time appoint, remove or suspend a member of the Group.

Should a vacancy arise, the Group will seek to fill the vacancy through an Expression of Interest process, using the selection criteria above.

Membership on this Group is not a paid appointment.

The Group will be supported by a dedicated Responsible Officer and/or any relevant delegates.

#### **4. Meetings**

Meetings of the Group will be held on a quarterly basis from March – December. Days and times may change as voted on by the Group

Decisions will only be made at meetings of the group if there is First Nations representation at the meeting or input into the decision prior to the meeting.

Motions cannot be adopted if a quorum does not exist. Quorum for decision making will be a minimum of half the membership plus one, of which two (2) First Nations people must be present. Council employees do not have voting rights. In the event of a quorum not being reached the meeting will not go ahead.

#### **5. Chairperson**

The Chairperson, as the RAP Champion will be the Director Community, Greater Shepparton City Council (or their delegate). If the Chairperson or their delegate is not present at a Group meeting, members will appoint an Acting Chairperson for that meeting. Appointment of the Acting Chairperson will be done by way of a vote of present Group members.

#### **6. Working Group conduct principles**

Working Group members are expected to:

- actively participate in group discussions and offer their opinions and views in a respectful manner;
- treat all persons with respect and have due regard to the opinions, rights and responsibilities of others;
- act with integrity;
- attend each meeting where practical and advise the Responsible Officer if unable to attend;
- declare and avoid conflicts of interest;
- refrain from releasing confidential information;
- comply with relevant Council policies;
- not speak on behalf of Council or the Group unless provided approval/authority from a relevant Council Officer;
- understand that no personal expenses associated with attending meetings will be reimbursed.

## 7. Reporting

Director Community along with Manager, Team Leader and Aboriginal Engagement Officer will be responsible on the reporting of various products i.e. RAP impacts, questions, internal reporting and public reporting.

## 8. Guest Speakers

At the request of the Group, guest speakers will be invited to attend and/or present at meetings on topics relating to the work of the Group.

## 9. Confidentiality

The deliberations of the Working Group should remain confidential and should not be communicated outside the Group without Councils permission. A member must not use any confidential information:

- for purposes other than those of the Group;
- for personal gain of any kind;
- to further the activities or purpose of any association, working group, or organisation of which the member may be a member of, affiliated with, employed by or represent.

## 10. Application

These *Terms of Reference* apply to all members of the Group. Group members are required to acknowledge their commitment to comply with these terms by signing the declaration (refer to Appendix 1).

## 11. Review

The Terms of Reference for the Group will be reviewed on an annual basis.

### Appendix 1: Declaration

I have read and understand the Greater Shepparton City Council Terms of Reference for the Reconciliation Action Plan 2023-25 implementation Working Group.

I hereby undertake to comply with the Terms of Reference.

**Signed:** \_\_\_\_\_

**Print name:** \_\_\_\_\_

**Date:** \_\_\_\_\_